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In the Pipeline

An Elsevier Boycott

Posted by **Derek**

There's been a movement afoot to boycott Elsevier journals. It's started over in the mathematics community, led by Timothy Gowers, a serious mathematician indeed. The objections to Elsevier are the ones you'd think: high prices, unsplittable bundles of journal subscriptions for institutions, and their strong support for legislation like the Research Works Act.

Writing about this is tricky, since I'm on the editorial board of an ACS journal that competes with Elsevier titles. Of course, as that link in the first paragraph shows, Nature Publishing Group has no problem talking about the issue themselves, and they're competing tooth and claw with Elsevier. At any rate, there's now a central website for the boycott movement, and it continues to gain publicity. There are, of course, some fields where Elsevier is more prominent than others - biomedically, the Cell Press journals (and The Lancet) are heavy hitters, so a real test of this movement will be to see how many people from these fields it can attract.

Personally, I think that the current system of scientific publishing is increasingly outmoded, although I'm loath to forecast what will replace it. But we could be looking at another step in its demise.

ABOUT THIS AUTHOR

Derek Lowe, an Arkansan by birth, got his BA from Hendrix College and his PhD in organic chemistry from Duke before spending time in Germany on a Humboldt Fellowship on his post-doc. He's worked for several major pharmaceutical companies since 1989 on drug discovery projects against schizophrenia, Alzheimer's, diabetes, osteoporosis and other diseases. To contact Derek email him directly: derekb.lowe@gmail.com Twitter: Dereklowe